



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Appeals of Prison Sentences of Seven Opposition Members in Azerbaijan

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Paul W. Jones
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 25, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, we have taken note of the November 22 statement issued by the OSCE Office in Baku regarding the November 19 decision by the Azerbaijani Court of Appeals to uphold the convictions and prison sentences handed down to seven opposition members in October of this year. We share the concerns expressed by the European Union.

We also note with concern reports that the Court of Appeals failed to inform all defense lawyers assigned to the case about the hearing in advance.

The United States is disappointed in the conduct of these trials to date and continues to voice concern over their fairness.

It is our understanding that the seven defendants will file a second appeal with the Supreme Court by the end of the week.

We strongly urge the government of Azerbaijan to uphold international standards on due process and the rule of law, and to ensure these standards are met in conformity with OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.